2010 and 2008 RFI Questions and NASA Responses

2010 RFI Questions/answers are as follows:

(no 2010 FAQ posted as of 1/15/10, as stated in the 2010 RFI FAQ posting will be updated on or before 2/9/10)

2008 RFI Questions/answers are as follows: (Historical)

Question 1: Has any consideration been given to using the Orbiters as emergency habitations, escape vehicles, or storage/lab space for the International Space Station?

Answer 1: This question is beyond the scope of the RFI. Even un-crewed Orbiters cannot remain on orbit longer than a relatively small number of days, primarily due to depletion of essential commodities such as cryogenic fluids and propellants. The Orbiters cannot be used as crew escape vehicles for ISS. Using the Orbiters to augment the ISS operations would require costly recertification and technical modifications that are not authorized or budgeted at this time.

Question 2: Would NASA consider submission of a proposal by an entity to purchase an Orbiter with the intention of using it for further flights?

Answer 2: No. This question is beyond the scope of the RFI. Continued spaceflight operation of an Orbiter would require the equivalent of a substantial portion of the engineering and production support for the entire Space Shuttle Program including all Space Transportation System elements (i.e., Reusable Solid Rocket Motors, Space Shuttle Main Engines, External Tank, Launch and Landing, etc.) This capability is not being offered by NASA because key elements are required for the Constellation Program and could not reasonably be duplicated elsewhere in the U.S. within the retirement horizon for the Space Shuttle Program.

Question 3: Will electronic components on the Space Shuttle Orbiters such as microprocessors be available?

Answer 3: The Space Shuttle Orbiters are historic vehicles. Except for removing hazards and the Space Shuttle Main Engines, NASA intends to make the Orbiters available in the configuration in which they are taken out of service in so far as reasonably possible. All other Space Shuttle personal property will be dispositioned by reutilization, transfer, donation, sale, or abandonment and destruction through the normal Federal property disposal process. Certain items of Space Shuttle personal property may be

controlled under the Arms Export Control Act (22 USC 2751, et. seq.) and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) (22 CFR 121) or the Export Administration Control Act of 1979 (50 USC 2401, et. seq.) and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) (15 CFR 730-774). Persons receiving controlled items must comply with all export restrictions imposed under the ITAR or the EAR. Violations of these regulations are punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

Question 4: Our firm is interested in providing services/expertise to end receivers of Space Shuttle Main Engine hardware, or any organization having a need for Space Shuttle Main Engine experience. Will NASA identify end user candidates on the transition website?

Answer 4: NASA will not publicly identify RFI respondents nor will NASA disclose proprietary information obtained as a result of this RFI.

Question 5: Are letters of support permitted as part of the RFI response?

Answer 5: The RFI process is intended to gather market research for NASA to make decisions regarding development of strategies for placement of Space Shuttle Orbiters and Space Shuttle Main Engines. No solicitation exists. Letters of support are permitted but are neither required nor encouraged. If letters of support are submitted, they will be considered part of the response which is limited to 25 pages in length.

Question 6: If letters of support cannot be submitted as part of the RFI will there be another opportunity to submit such letters of support and to whom would they be addressed?

Answer 6: See answer to question 5. The members of the public may contact NASA at the following address:

Public Communications Office
NASA Headquarters
Suite 5K39
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Question 7: Can respondents to the RFI include photographs in their documents as long as those photographs are embedded within the text?

Answer 7: Yes, provided the total response does not exceed 25 pages in length.

Question 8: Is there a file size limitation (bytes) imposed on the RFI response?

Answer 8: No. However, file size for e-mail attachments are limited only by the physical capacity of the sender's and NASA's e-mail systems. The NASA e-mail system typically handles messages with a total attachment size up to 10 megabytes (MB). If RFI responses will exceed 10MB, the responses may be submitted on CD-ROM and sent to NASA Headquarters via express mail, commercial delivery, or courier delivery to the following address:

SSP RFI Responses
NASA Headquarters
Office of Infrastructure (LD000)
Attn: Receiving & Inspection
NASA Headquarters
300 E Street SW
Washington DC 20024-3210

Due to security procedures for scanning incoming mail, submission via U.S. Mail Service is not recommended. Items mailed through the U.S. Postal Service (including registered or certified) should be addressed as

SSP RFI Responses
Office of Infrastructure (LD000)
Mail Stop 4G74
NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Question 9: When will NASA publicly release the names of organizations responding to the RFI?

Answer 9: NASA will not publicly identify RFI respondents nor will NASA disclose proprietary information obtained as a result of this RFI.

Question 10: Would NASA allow an Orbiter to be partially dismantled to permit transportation by road to a recipient's facility provided the Orbiter is fully reassembled after it reaches its final destination?

Answer 10: The Orbiters are rare, historic vehicles that must be carefully preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. Orbiter design and construction is highly integrated and not conducive to easy disassembly and reassembly. For example, the fuselage and wings are covered with a complex

arrangement of thermal protection tiles and other materials that would have to be removed to gain access to the underlying structure.

While NASA would consider transportation alternatives to ferry flight by Shuttle Carrier Aircraft, all unproven transportation methods especially those requiring partial disassembly of an Orbiter must be analyzed and demonstrated by the potential recipient to NASA to be safe for transportation crews, the public, and the Orbiter itself. The recipient organization would be responsible for all costs associated with developing the procedures, demonstrating to NASA's satisfaction that the procedures are sound, moving the hardware, and restoring the Orbiter to complete and original condition after it reaches its final destination. The viability of alternate transportation arrangements and the risks associated with them would be a significant factor in making future Orbiter placement decisions.

Question 11: Why does the RFI state that assembled Space Shuttle Main Engines (SSME) will not be installed in, nor included with, the Orbiters?

Answer 11: Current planning calls for NASA to retain all flight-worthy SSMEs for technical mitigation and potential programmatic reuse within NASA or the Department of Defense until final disposition decisions are made. The only SSMEs that will be available for donation in the immediate future are the six-to-ten non-flight-worthy unassembled or partially assembled SSMEs mentioned in the RFI that could become display pieces. NASA expects that some RFI responses will address only the Orbiters, some will address only the display SSMEs, and some will address both.

Question 12: If an organization were to engage in discussions with the National Air and Space Museum with respect to acquiring the Orbiter Enterprise, would that organization be at a disadvantage?

Answer 12: Such organizations would gain neither an advantage nor a disadvantage in being considered to receive a flown Orbiter.

Question 13: How will NASA use the responses to this RFI? What are the next steps?

Answer 13: This is a Request for Information (RFI) only and does not constitute a commitment, implied or otherwise, that NASA will follow any particular course of action in this matter. The RFI responses will help NASA determine what next steps may be appropriate to ultimately make Orbiter and SSME placement decisions. If NASA determines that a Request for

Proposals (RFP) is the appropriate next step, the RFP process would be open and not limited only to those organizations responding to this RFI.